



## **Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission**

### **Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct**

We, the staff of the Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission, subscribe to this Code of Ethics and Conduct, which is drawn from the American Institute of Certified Planners Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct.

### **Principles to Which We Aspire**

#### **We Shall Responsibly Serve the Public's Interest**

***Our primary obligation is to serve the public interest and we, therefore, owe our allegiance to a conscientiously attained concept of that interest as formulated through continuous and open debate. We shall achieve high standards of professional integrity, proficiency, and knowledge. To comply with our obligation to the public, we aspire to the following principles:***

- a) We shall always be conscious of the rights of others.
- b) We shall have special concern for the long-range consequences of present actions.
- c) We shall pay special attention to the interrelatedness of decisions.
- d) We shall provide timely, adequate, clear, and accurate information on planning issues to all affected persons and governmental decision-makers.
- e) We shall give the public the opportunity to have a meaningful impact on the development of plans and programs that may affect it. Participation should be broad enough to include those who lack formal organization or influence.
- f) We shall seek social justice by working to expand choice and opportunity for all persons, recognizing a special responsibility to plan for the needs of the disadvantaged and to promote racial and economic integration. We shall urge the alteration of policies, institutions, and decisions that oppose such needs.
- g) We shall promote excellence of design and endeavor to conserve and preserve the integrity and heritage of the natural and built environment.
- h) We shall deal fairly and evenhandedly with all participants in the planning process.
- i) We shall not use the power of any office to seek or obtain a special advantage that is not a matter of public knowledge or is not in the public interest.

#### **We Shall Responsibly Serve the Commission's Interest**

***We owe diligent, creative, and competent performance of the work we do in pursuit of the interests of the Commission. Such performance, however, shall always be consistent with our faithful service to the public interest.***

- a) We shall exercise independent, objective, professional judgment on behalf of the Commission and our various partners.
- b) We shall not deliberately or with reckless indifference fail to provide adequate, timely, clear and accurate information on planning issues and other matters that come before us.
- c) We shall accept the decisions of the Commission concerning the objectives and nature of the professional services we perform unless the course of action is illegal.
- d) Should the decisions of the Commission be plainly inconsistent with our primary obligation to the public interest, it shall be our responsibility to make this case known to it and urge the alteration of policies and decisions so as to better achieve the public interest.
- e) We shall avoid a conflict of interest or even the appearance of a conflict of interest in carrying out our assignments and duties.
- f) We shall not, during the period of our employment with the Commission, undertake other employment in planning or a related profession, whether or not for pay, without having made full written disclosure to our public employer, Sangamon County, and having received subsequent written permission to undertake additional employment, unless our employer has a written policy which expressly dispenses with a need to obtain such consent.
- g) We shall not, as public officials or employees, accept from anyone other than our public employer any compensation, commission, rebate, or other advantage that may be perceived as related to our public office or employment.
- h) We shall not, as public officials or employees, engage in private communications with planning process participants if the discussions relate to a matter over which we have authority to make a binding, final determination if such private communications are prohibited by law or by agency rules, procedures, or custom.
- i) We shall not engage in private discussions with decision makers in the planning process in any manner prohibited by law or by agency rules, procedures, or custom.

### **We Shall Responsibly Serve Our Governmental Partners**

***As with the Commission and our governmental employer, Sangamon County, we also owe diligent, creative, and competent performance of the work we do in pursuit of the interests of our governmental partners and client communities. Such performance, however, shall always be consistent with our faithful service to the public interest. In addition:***

- a) We shall not accept an assignment when the services to be performed involve conduct that we know to be illegal or in violation of our code of ethics.
  - b) We shall not use to our personal advantage, nor that of a subsequent client, partner or employer, information gained in a professional relationship that a governmental partner or client has requested be held inviolate or that we should recognize as confidential because its disclosure could result in embarrassment or other detriment to the client, partner, employer or public's interest.
- Nor shall we disclose such confidential information except when (1) required by process of law, or (2) required to prevent a clear violation of law, or (3) required to prevent a substantial injury to the public. Disclosure pursuant to (2) and (3) shall not be made until after we have verified the facts and issues involved and, when practicable, exhausted efforts to obtain reconsideration of the matter and have sought separate opinions on the issue from other qualified professionals employed by our partners and employer.
- c) We shall not perform work on a project or take on an engagement if, in addition to the agreed upon compensation from our governmental employer, there is a possibility for direct personal or

financial gain to us, our family members, or persons living in our household, unless our employer, after full written disclosure from us, consents in writing to the arrangement.

d) We shall neither deliberately, nor with reckless indifference, misrepresent the qualifications, views and findings of other professionals.

e) We shall not solicit prospective clients or service engagements through use of false or misleading claims, harassment, or duress.

f) We shall not misstate our education, experience, training, or any other facts which are relevant to our professional qualifications.

g) We shall not sell, or offer to sell, services by stating or implying an ability to influence decisions by improper means.

i) We shall not accept work beyond our professional competence unless the client or employer understands and agrees that such work will be performed by another professional competent to perform the work and acceptable to the client or employer.

j) We shall not accept work for a fee, or pro bono, that we know cannot be performed with the promptness required by the prospective client, or that is required by the circumstances of the assignment.

l) We shall not fail to disclose the interests of our governmental partners or clients when participating in the planning process. Nor shall we participate in an effort to conceal the true interests of our partners or clients.

m) We shall not unlawfully discriminate against another person.

### **We Shall Responsibly Serve Our Profession and Colleagues**

***We shall contribute to the development of, and respect for, our profession by improving knowledge and techniques, making work relevant to the solution of community problems, and increasing the public's understanding of planning activities.***

a) We shall protect and enhance the integrity of our profession.

b) We shall educate the public about planning issues and their relevance to our everyday lives.

c) We shall describe and comment on the work and views of other professionals in a fair and professional manner.

d) We shall share the results of experience and research that contribute to the body of planning knowledge.

e) We shall examine the applicability of planning theories, methods, research and practice and standards to the facts and analysis of each particular situation and shall not accept the applicability of a customary solution without first establishing its appropriateness to the situation.

f) We shall contribute time and resources to the professional development of students, interns, beginning professionals, and other colleagues.

g) We shall increase the opportunities for members of underrepresented groups to become professional planners and help them advance in the profession.

h) We shall continue to enhance our professional education and training.

i) We shall systematically and critically analyze ethical issues in the practice of planning.

j) We shall contribute time and effort to groups lacking in adequate planning resources and to voluntary professional activities.

k) We shall not use the product of others' efforts to seek professional recognition or acclaim intended for producers of original work.

l) We shall not direct or coerce other professionals to make analyses or reach findings not supported by available evidence.

m) We shall neither deliberately, nor with reckless indifference, commit any wrongful act, whether or not specified in the Rules of Conduct, that reflects adversely on our professional fitness.